

**Portage County Democratic Party Central/Executive Committee**  
**P.O. Box 729 Ravenna, Ohio 44266**  
**www.portagedemocrats.org**

**Meeting Date: September 8, 2021**  
**Time: 6 p.m.**

**ATTENDANCE**

Central Committee Members: 27  
Guests: 7  
Elected Officials: 6

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Dean DePerro called the meeting was called to order at 6:15 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Becky Doggett led the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

**DECLARATION OF QUORUM**

Secretary Cindy Greene stated that a quorum had been established with 27 members present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Frank Hairston moved to approve the minutes from June 30, 2021. Chris Clevenger-Morris seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**MEMBERSHIP UPDATES**

**Resignations**

DePerro announced that Patrick Lorch of Kent 6D has moved and therefore resigned from the Central Committee.

**Appointments**

DePerro said that two of the appointees listed on the agenda (Kelly Clary from Aurora 2B and Rebekah Doggett from Shalersville) had been sworn in at a previous meeting and were listed on the agenda by mistake. DePerro then asked if new appointees Pam Mascio from Aurora 5A and Sandy Money Penny from Mogadore Village were present. They were not present. DePerro said that acceptance of their appointment will have to wait until the next meeting.

**Officer Resignation and Appointment of Replacement**

DePerro announced, as he did at the last meeting, that Cindy Greene is resigning from the position of secretary. She has been in the position since 2015. DePerro expressed his appreciation for Greene's time and dedication to the Central Committee. A round of applause for Greene followed.

DePerro said that after the resignation announcement at the last meeting, some members expressed interest in the position and that Audrey Kessler was selected as a candidate to fill the position of secretary. DePerro then asked if there were any other nominees. None were offered. Frank Hairston moved to approve Audrey Kessler as the new secretary of the Central Committee. Bruce Ribelin seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Kessler assumed the position that evening.

DePerro then announced that Joseph Falatok from Suffield C had applied to serve on the Central Committee but needed to be approved by the membership. Falatok introduced himself to those present. Greene moved to accept the appointment of Joseph Falatok from Suffield C. Clevenger-Morris seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

DePerro asked that Judge Mark Fankhouser swear in Kessler and Falatok. Fankhouser read the oath, and both appointees were sworn in.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer Gary Horning gave the treasurer's report. For the General Account, the balance as of June 30, 2021, was \$2,960.59; income was \$9,175.00; expenses were \$5,476.68; the balance as of August 31, 2021, was \$6,658.91. For the Restricted Account, the balance as of June 30, 2021, was \$1,369.09; income was \$2,000.00; expenses were \$1,917.19; the balance as of August 31, 2021, was \$1,451.90. Ribelin moved to approve the treasurer's report as presented. Mickey Marozzi seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Finance Committee**

No one was present to give the report. DePerro, however, reminded those present that the golf event fundraiser has been canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was intended to be a significant fundraiser for the Portage County Democratic Party. He said the event likely will be held at some point in the future when conditions are more favorable for doing so. A Chair's Circle event is planned for this fall, around the end of October. The expectation that the Chair's Circle event will be in person. DePerro added that he has asked the Finance Committee to be responsible for every aspect of raising money for the Portage County Democratic Party.

### **Constitutional Review Committee**

**Constitution.** Second Vice Chair Brad Cromes noted that the revised constitution was presented at the last meeting and that members were invited to offer their input before a final draft document is prepared. He added that an affirmative vote from 60 percent of members is needed to approve the revised constitution. **Committee Chair** said the final changes were minor and mostly matters of style. He asked if there were any questions or additional changes. One question was asked and answered. No additional changes were offered. **thanked the committee members** for their work on the project. Clevenger-Morris moved to accept the revisions to the Portage County Democratic Party Constitution. Hairston seconded the motion. By a show of hands, the motion was approved unanimously.

**Bylaws.** DePerro noted that the revised bylaws had been distributed to the members prior to tonight's meeting. Marozzi moved to approve the revised bylaws. Hairston seconded the motion. By a show of hands, the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Membership Committee**

Clevenger-Morris gave a report on the Central Committee member handbook. He also thanked the committee members for their work on the project. Cromes noted that the final draft of the handbook had been distributed to the members prior to tonight's meeting. Clevenger-Morris moved to approve the Central Committee member handbook. Deloris Durkin seconded the motion. By a show of hands, the motion was approved unanimously.

### **Service Committee**

First Vice Chair Denise Smith gave the committee report. She highlighted some of the service projects the committee organized, including working with the Salvation Army and The Haven and the upcoming collection of items for Safer Futures. A flyer on the Safer Futures event was distributed to all members at tonight's meeting, and copy is on file with these minutes. Smith also stressed that these service projects have two goals: (1) help and get to know people in the Portage County community and (2) develop and maintain the party's credibility and trustworthiness among the residents of Portage County. She also asked for suggestions for additional service projects. Smith also announced that Independence Inc. will be having a free Thank You Tailgate event on September 12 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. A flyer was distributed at the meeting, and a copy is on file with these minutes. John Kennedy then spoke about the 26-mile Hunger Run he has organized. He noted that the run he organized year that raised over \$4,000. The run this year is scheduled for September 24 and 25 and October 1 and 9. On each day, he and other participants will run about 18 to 25 miles and cover three sections of Portage County. The last day will finish in Kent, probably at Kent Social Services. Kennedy asked that anyone who is interested in participating to email him at johnkennedyforohio@gmail.com.

## **BOARD OF ELECTIONS UPDATES**

Terrie Nielsen said the Board of Elections needs poll workers and added that less than 50 percent of Central Committee members returned the poll-worker recruitment forms that were mailed to them. She asked that people who have not turned in the forms to please do so because training classes for poll workers are now being scheduled. A new incentive for potential poll workers is aimed at attorneys. They can receive three free CLE credits by being a poll worker. The board of

elections will be notifying all attorneys about the CLE credits incentive. The ballots are being finalized. She stressed the importance of the judicial races on the ballot. In-person early voting starts October 5. The last day to register to vote is October 4. She urged everyone to vote and to update their voter information if it has changed.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Frank Hairston introduced Marvin Woods, who is running for an at-large city council position in Streetsboro. Frank Hairston said Woods has been endorsed by the Portage County Young Democrats and by the newly formed **Black Elected Democrats**. He urged anyone present from Streetsboro to please support Woods and that the Democratic Party do so as well. Frank Hairston then introduced Mark Hairston, who was not present. Mark Hairston is running for Ravenna City Council Ward 1 and has been endorsed by the Portage County Young Democrats and **Black Elected Officials**. Frank Hairston also noted that Central Committee member Pat Dennison, who was not present, is running for a position on the Ravenna School Board. He urged members to support Dennison as well.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Candidate Communications**

DePerro asked if any of the elected officials present would like to speak. First up was Judge Kevin Poland. Poland said that the new term starts on January 1, 2022. This is his 12th year on the bench. He said he has received the bar association rating of “Highly Recommended,” while his opponent was rated “Not Recommended.” Poland added that it is essential that all Democrats come out to vote because can’t anything for granted. Judge Mark Fankhauser spoke next. He also received the rating of “Highly Recommended” and said that he echoed Poland’s comments about Democrats getting out to vote. DePerro noted that Fankhauser has a fundraiser tomorrow at the Ravenna Elks. Donations are accepted but not required. DePerro then asked Woods if he would like to speak, which he did. He talked about his background, including that he has lived and/or worked in Streetsboro for several years, is very active in the community, and was interim council person for Streetsboro Ward 3. He said he wants to bring some diversity and new ideas to city council and asked for the support of the Central Committee members. Last to speak was Vince Coia, who is running for reelection. He said he appreciated the help he has received from the Central Committee members in the past and asked for their continued support in the November election. DePerro then said that bumper stickers and other campaign items for the candidates are available in the party office, which is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. He urged people to come by for these items and get them out into the community. He added, and Fankhauser and Poland concurred, that if people cannot pick up the items themselves, the items can be brought to those people who request them.

### **Volunteer Recruitment**

First Vice Chair Denise Smith thanked the members who worked at the party’s booth at the Portage County Fair. The Balloon A-Fair is next, on September 18. It is staffed, but other members are welcome to join them. This is the last summer event. Help is needed at the office, especially on Fridays. Smith said she can be there on some but not all Fridays and asked that anyone who can help to please sign up to do so. People also can sign up for a Monday or a Wednesday.

## **CONSTITUENT GROUP REPORTS**

### **Federated Democratic Women**

Becky Doggett gave the report. They had to cancel the V.O.T.E. Gala because of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the lack of speakers and caterers willing to commit to the event. They hope to do something later in the year. Guest speaker at the organization’s last meeting was Edna Border, new president of the FDW of Ohio. After discussion, the members decided to make the FDW all-inclusive in terms of its membership. She stated the sole requirement for membership with full benefits and responsibilities. The organization’s constitution and bylaws will be amended to reflect the change. Doggett then issued an invitation to everyone in the room who would like to join to please do so. DePerro noted the FDW’s mission continues to be to advance the interests of women, but they want to expand their role. membership dues are \$15 a year. A written copy of Doggett’s report is on file with these minutes.

### **Portage County Young Democrats**

Clevenger-Morris gave the report. He said that the organization’s efforts to have the Portage County Fair to ban the sale and display of the confederate battle flag was successful, and the ban is in effect for this year’s fair. The second round of the endorsement process for candidates is open. Candidates must complete three questionnaires by September 15 at 4 p.m. to be considered. The organization now has federal PAC status, which will allow for support of federal candidates (including the U.S. Senate race in Ohio) and candidates at all levels in Portage County. The organization is in the middle of membership drive. Potential members must be between the ages of 14 and 40. The organization will be working with

the FDW on election call lists. The goal is to call at least 5,000 people between now and election day. To help with the calling, members should sign up with Smith. Scripts will be provided. A written copy of Clevenger-Morris' report is on file with these minutes.

**Kent State University College Democrats**

No one was available to give a report.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

DePerro said a motion was needed to make the Membership Committee a standing committee, with Clevenger-Morris as the chair. Cromes moved to make the Membership Committee a standing committee and retain the current members and chair (i.e., Clevenger-Morris). Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. DePerro said a motion was needed to make the Volunteer Committee (formerly known as the Service Committee) a standing committee. Smith moved to make the Volunteer Committee (formerly known as the Service Committee) a standing committee and retain the current members and chair (i.e., Smith). Ribelin seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Clevenger-Morris moved to adjourn the meeting. Durkin seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

*JSubmitted by Audrey C. Kessler*